

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 AID-20 EB-11 CIEP-02 TRSE-00

STR-08 CEA-02 COME-00 FEA-02 INT-08 SCI-06 IO-14

DRC-01 /177 W

----- 077290

R 060920Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1401

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ADIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0696

E.O. 11652:1(DS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XJ

SUBJ: ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

REF: ABIDJAN 865(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: MFA AFRICAN DIRECTOR PROVIDED US FEB 1 WITH
ASSESSEMTN OF CURRENT STATE OF PLAY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AFRICA.
ASSESSEMTN WAS GENERALLY GLOOMY WITH OPINION EXPRESSED THAT
IT WOULD BE YEARS BEFORE ISRAELI-AFRICAN RELATIONS RETURNED TO
THEIR PREVIOUS LEVEL. MFA SOURCE ALSO PREDICTED THAT ARAB-
AFRICAN RELATIONS WOULD ALSO BE IN FOR TENSE PERIOD UNLESS
SOMETHING WERE DONE TO CIRCUMVENT HIGH PRICE OF OIL. MFA
HAS RECEIVED REPORT THAT SEVERAL AFRICAN STATES HAVE BEEN RE
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CONSIDERING QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL BUT NO PREDICTIONS

AS TO RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WAS OFFERED. END SUMMARY.

1. EAST AFRICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR RUPPIN OF MFA PROVIDED GLOOMY ASSESSMENT FEB 1 OF FUTURE OF ISRAELI-AFRICAN RELATIONS, STATING THAT IN HIS OPINION IT WOULD BE YEARS BEFORE ISRAELI POSITION IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA WOULD BE RESTORED TO ITS PREVIOUS LEVEL. HE CHARACTERIZED PRESENT AFRICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM AS EXTREMELY FLUID, WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT AFRICAN COUNTRIES FEELING THAT DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL HAD BROUGHT LITTLE OR NO TANGIBLE BENEFITS, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF RAPIDLY INCREASING OIL PRICES. IN THIS REGARD, RUPPIN SAID THAT ARAB-AFRICAN RELATIONS MAY WELL UNDERGO STRENUOUS PERIOD UNLESS ARAB COUNTRIES EXTEND LIBERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA.

2. RUPPIN SAID THAT ARAB OIL EXPORTING COUNTRIES HAD PROPOSED CREATION OF AN ARAB-AFRICAN BANK AND OF A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND, EACH TO BE CAPITALIZED WITH 200 MILLION DOLLARS, AS ONE WAY OF EASING EFFECT OF RAPIDLY ESCALATING OIL PRICES. THIS WAS HARDLY SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES SINCE YEARLY OIL BILL WOULD BE IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF FIVE BILLION DOLLARS (RUPPIN'S ESTIMATE) AT CURRENT PRICES. RUPPIN ASKED EMBOFF IF ANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD APPROACHED NIGERIA IN ATTEMPT TO GET LATTER USE ITS INFLUENCE IN OPEC TO PRESS FOR TWO-TIER PRICING ARRANGMENT. EMBOFF STATED THAT WE HAD RECEIVED NO REPORTS ON THIS SUBJECT.

3. RUPPIN SAID THAT MFA HAD RECEIVED REPORT THAT SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD BEEN HOLDING CONTACTS AMONG THEMSELVES TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED WERE SENEGAL, IVORY COAST, NIGERIA AND TANZANIA, EVIDENCE OF THESE CONTACTS WAS TENUOUS, RUPPIN SAID, AND NO PREDICTION ON POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS COULD BE HAZARDED, ALTHOUGH COUNTRIES MENTIONED WERE LEAST SUSCEPTIBLE TO ARAB PRESSURE AND HAD BEEN UNHAPPY OVER DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. THIS WAS OBVIOUS IN CASE OF NIGERIA WHICH WAS OIL EXPORTING COUNTRY ALTHOUGH IT DID HAVE LARGE MOSLEM POPULATION. REGARDING TANZANIA, RUPPIN SAID NYERERE HAD ALWAYS KEPT WATCHFUL EYE ON ARAB-ISLAMIC INFLUENCE, AND WHILE HE COULD NOT BE SAID TO HAVE ADOPTED PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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ISRAELI POSITION IN PAST, ARAB PRESSURE ON HIM COULD ONLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, ESPECIALLY ARAB FLIRTATION WITH IDI AMIN. RUPPIN SAID SENEGAL'S PRES SENGHOR WAS ALSO LESS OPEN TO ARAB PRESSURE THAN OTHERS. REGARDING HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, RUPPIN SAID HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL HAD BEEN BASED UPON HIS FEAR OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN IVORY COAST.

4. IF ABOVE COUNTRIES MADE DECISION TO RESUME SOME LEVEL

OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, RUPPIN SAID SEVERAL OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES WOULD PROBABLY FOLLOW SUIT. GHANA HAD CUT RELATIONS RELUCTANTLY AND MIGHT NOT BE ADVERSE TO RESUMING THEM IF OTHERS WERE TO DO SO. SAME COULD BE SAID FOR KENYA, WITH WHICH ISRAEL STILL HAD COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP. RUPPIN SAID THAT KENYA HAD APPROACHED ISRAEL AND SAID THAT IT DID NOT WANT REMAINING TIES TO BE BROKEN. ETHIOPIA WAS MORE PROBLEMATIC, SINCE RELATIONS HAD BEEN BROKEN FOR REASONS OVER WHICH ISRAEL HAD NO CONTROL, NAMELY ETHIOPIAN PERCEPTIONS OF RUSSIAN-SOMALIAN THREAT AND UNHAPPINESS OVER LEVEL OF US ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. RUPPIN SAID THAT THERE WAS STILL LARGE RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL FOR ISRAEL AMONG ETHIOPIANS WHO HAD FELT IT A BLOW TO THEIR SELF ESTEEM THAT RELATIONS HAD BEEN BROKEN. WE NOTE IN ADDIS 12450 THAT AN ADDITIONAL MAJOR MOTIVE BEHIND ETHIOPIA'S DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WAS FEAR OF LOSING ADDIS AS OAU HEADQUARTERS. REGARDING ZAIRE,, RUPPIN SAID MOBUTU HAD BEEN A PRIMARY FACTOR IN AFRICA'S RUSH TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. DISPLAYING CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BITTERNESS, RUPPIN SAID MOBUTU HAD TOUCH OF MEGALOMANIA AND THAT HIS DESIRE TO PLAY PAN-AFRICAN ROLE HAD BEEN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN HIS DECISION TO SEVER RELATIONS.

5. REGARDING FUTURE STATE OF ISRAELI-AFRICAN RELATIONS, RUPPIN SAID THERE WAS NOT MUCH USE IN SPECULATING WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN EVOLVING SITUATION. PRESENT SITUATION WAS TOO FLUID AND ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. ISRAEL WOULD REACT TO EVENTS AS THEY OCCURRED AND IF AN AFRICAN COUNTRY DECIDED TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, THEN ISRAEL WOULD SEND AN AMBASSADOR. RUPPIN THOUGHT THAT STAGE OF RELATIONS WITH AFRICA, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT HAVE SAME DEGREE OF WARMTH NOR BE AS EXTENSIVE AS IN THE PAST.

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6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH RUPPIN DID NOT IDENTIFY SOURCE OF REPORT IN PARA 3 ABOVE, IT MAY WELL HAVE COME FROM ISRAELI IN CHARGE OF INTERESTS SECTION IN ABIDJAN(REFTEL). RUPPIN WAS OBVIOUSLY BEING VERY CAUTIOUS IN NOT ATTRIBUTING TOO MUCH SIGNIFICANCE TO REPORT THAT SEVERAL COUNTRIES RECONSIDERING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. IN ANY CASE, IT IS ALL TOO OBVIOUS TO US THAT EASING OF ISRAEL'S CURRENT DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION IS UNLIKELY TO BEGIN IN AFRICA.
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